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ACCIDENTS BY SEA AND RAIL.

THE simultaneous appearance of two bulky Blue-books containing respectively the abstract of the Board of Trade Returns of sea casualties to British ships at home and abroad during the twelve months ending 30th June 1882, and the accidents and casualties as reported by the several railway Companies in the United Kingdom during the year ending 31st December 1882, suggests that an instructive inquiry might be instituted concerning these two great causes of mortality. Nowadays, indeed, since travelling is the daily occupation of many, and the constant duty or amusement of by far the larger half of the civilised world, the number of deaths by accident which must be assigned to this cause forms a much larger proportion of the total death-rate than is generally supposed. Year by year, the victims of the rail, the river, and the sea, approach more nearly to the number of those who are struck down by disease; and since we are most of us frequently obliged to make use of the marvellous machinery of locomotion, it may not be uninteresting to consider some of the dangers of those two great highways—the railway and the ocean.

So great a prominence is given to 'losses at sea,' that the popular dread of its dangers is certainly excusable. Few landmen, probably, ever venture on a voyage, of however short duration, without some misgivings. It is, for instance, very disquieting to hear the boom of the fog-whistle when one is a passenger on a steamer becalmed in a fog. On such an occasion, one naturally conjures up memories of some of those heartrending collisions which mark the Steam Age. Similarly, the summer tourist, tempted by sunshine and fine weather to trust himself to a small boat, often bitterly repents his rashness, if the wind freshen, and the sky become overcast, and eagerly measures with his eye the distance from the shore. Again, when we bid a tearful farewell to friends going over the sea, the risks they run are never absent from our

thoughts. It seems as though the perils of the seas were in very truth inexhaustible. Beside the winds and waves, the sailor has to contend with countless other sources of danger. Year by year, hundreds of well-found ships go down with all hands, none of whom live to tell the tale. At sea, by a strange irony of fate, the cry of 'Fire!' has a terrible meaning, and yet sailors all the world over are most careless in running this risk. It is a constant practice with many sailors, and especially with fishermen, to 'turn in' with one of the shortest of short pipes between their lips, and the regulations must indeed be severely enforced which can prevent them doing so. Fires at sea so often cause the total destruction of the ship, that it is not surprising that so little information should be forthcoming as to their cause; but it is to be feared that many of them are due to this or some other similar act of carelessness on the part of passengers or crew. Of late years, however, 'fire-drill' has become a regular part of the routine on board most large ships, and improvements have been introduced into the best class of vessels, so that an outbreak of fire can often be confined to one part, and thus rendered comparatively harmless to life before it is finally extinguished.

Strangely enough, too, the progress of commerce and science has added to rather than diminished sea-risks. Thus, the immense increase of shipping of late years, and especially of steamships, has more than doubled the chances of collision, and the 'rule of the road' has become one of the most abstruse sciences. In future, indeed, master mariners will have to be well versed in practical dynamics. So fruitful a cause of casualties at sea is collision, that it occupies a heading to itself in the Returns, and is forming an increasing source of peril. It is, however, to be hoped that the many new rules which have been gradually brought into use, with a special view to remedying this state of things, will do much to cancel the increment of danger due to the increase of shipping, if not to lessen the

risk altogether. With such a portentous number of causes of accidents at sea, it is certainly not to be wondered at that a maritime nation like ours should be concerned for the risks run by sailors and passengers by water. The long annual list of founderings, strandings, and collisions, sufficiently justifies the popular apprehensions; and when we add to this the number of vessels reported 'missing,' or, as the sad record runs, 'not heard of' since they sailed, or were 'spoken' on a significantly remote date, it seems as though we can hardly exaggerate sea-risks. Nor is the register of disaster even then complete; for under the comprehensive reading, 'other causes,' are scheduled many ships lost or condemned through such various mishaps as burning, either by spontaneous combustion of cargo, explosion of gunpowder, or of gas in coal-bunkers, or otherwise; starting planks or springing leaks; contact with ice; loss of sails, rudder, or anchors; swamping or capsizing; and although these, fortunately, only cause a small fraction of the total loss of life at sea—since they are chiefly disasters of such a nature as to give those on board time to escape—it is impossible to ignore them in this brief comparative view of accidents at sea.

If we turn to the other great source of accidental death—the railway—we find the record scarcely less startling, although it is very much the fashion to comment upon a railway accident as though it demonstrated the safety of railway travelling. If we strike the average of railway fatalities, by comparing them with the total number of passengers carried, we, of course, arrive at a result which is very satisfactory to the railway Companies. But it is scarcely logical to leave out the very much larger number who are only slightly injured in mind or body, but many of whom subsequently die in consequence of their injuries, after a sufficient interval to permit of their being omitted from the official list of fatalities. However satisfactory the calculations of statisticians as to any one's chances of not being killed on a railway journey, the real hazards of this mode of travelling are not fully appreciated. If, for instance, the public were better informed of the actual number of minor mishaps which occur on railways, many of which are practically hushed up through fear of alarming popular susceptibilities, they would probably exercise greater prudence in providing against possibilities. There is no means of ascertaining the number of persons who insure themselves in case of death, or partial or total disablement through railway accidents; but it will probably not be disputed that, as compared with the total number of railway passengers, it is very small.

In this connection, it may be interesting to consider briefly the general character of railway accidents. Of these, collision is the most frequent and most fatal. It is a necessary consequence of the fallibility of man, and however great may be the precautions taken against it, it is doubtful whether under any circumstances it can be wholly escaped. At the same time, since the cases in which collisions occur between two passenger-trains are few as compared with those between passenger-trains and goods-trains,

it seems that much yet remains to be done to lessen this danger. Goods-trains, for example, should never pass through stations, experience proving that the shunting, which is chiefly carried out on the main line, is the commonest cause of collision. Among other of the perils of railway travelling, the following may be briefly enumerated: Trains leaving the rails; travelling in the wrong direction through points; running into stations at too high speed; bursting of boilers or tubes of engines; and failure of machinery, wheels, and especially of axles, the break apparatus, and couplings. It will be noticed that these are all of them due to locomotion. But the dangers of the road itself are scarcely less serious. Thus, among constant causes of accidents may be included—cattle or other obstructions on line; gates at level crossings; failure of bridges or rails; and floods. The schedule of accidents to passengers from causes other than trains, rolling-stock, and permanent way, is also instructive, since it clearly points to a culpable carelessness on the part of the public. Thus, every year a large number of persons are killed or injured by falling between carriages and platforms, when attempting to alight from or get into trains in motion; passing over the line at stations or at level crossings; trespassing on railways; or falling out of carriages during the travelling of trains. The fatalities to servants in the employ of the railway Companies are very frequent, and the calling must possess peculiar fascinations, since the risks incurred in it are so great. Most people are, for instance, familiar with the constant process of coupling or uncoupling wagons or passenger-carriages, and many have probably often wondered at the coolness of the men who perform this duty, which is a frequent cause of fatal and other accidents. Again, fatalities during shunting are lamentably common; and in spite of the remarkable ease with which guards and other employés get on and off trains in motion, many are killed and injured through this practice. A large number of mishaps of another class occur on railway premises; but these can hardly be regarded as railway accidents, and are in many cases the fault of the victims. Thus, passengers fall down steps, or over boxes, &c., at railway stations; and wagoners and others are frequently injured when loading or unloading wagons, or carrying goods; or by falling off stationary engines or vehicles, or from some other similar cause.

There can, however, be no doubt that greater attention has been paid by the various railway Companies to precautions of late years, and many very important improvements have been made; amongst other things, for instance, in the break apparatus. The regulations imposed by the Board of Trade in these matters are, too, much more strict than they were, and have had an appreciable effect in diminishing the number of fatalities, although many of the railway Companies have not yet fully complied with them. We should, indeed, probably have much fewer accidents, but for the great competition between the Companies. This in some cases takes the very dangerous form of rivalry in speed; the public, with a suicidal rashness, almost invariably choosing the quickest route. In one notable instance that occurs to us, two of the leading railway Companies have long competed for the passenger

traffic by giving instructions to their drivers to accomplish a journey of nearly two hundred miles in as much less than four hours as possible; and the trains of the more successful Company for some time accomplished the distance in five or ten minutes less than those of its rival. But eventually all their best engine-drivers struck, and refused to undertake the task, giving as their reason, that at one or two spots on the road *the engine jumped at the facing-points!* We have reason to believe that the rate of speed demanded was reduced in consequence of this representation; but the circumstance illustrates one of the dangers of railway travelling.

The long hours which signalmen are required to work—in some cases as many as thirteen and sixteen at a stretch—are another source of danger, which will probably entail a further sacrifice of human life before it is removed. Overwork on a railway cannot be defended on any known principle. It is true that no perfection of mechanism can atone for mistakes made in consequence of the human agency which must necessarily be employed; but the public safety, as well as humanity, demands that men who are intrusted with the lives of hundreds of their fellow-beings should not have their powers of endurance strained until they fail.

Some of the figures given in the recent Returns forcibly illustrate the foregoing remarks. The total number of accidental deaths reported to the Board of Trade by the several railway Companies during last year was eleven hundred and sixty-three, while eight thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight persons were injured. These totals comprise all the serious casualties on railways during the year. As we have already pointed out, the rate of mortality among railway employes is terribly high, no fewer than five hundred and fifty-three having been killed, and two thousand five hundred and seventy-six injured, in 1882. The number of passengers killed was one hundred and twenty-seven; injured, seventeen hundred and thirty-six; while three hundred and six trespassers—including sixty-two cases of suicide—were killed, and one hundred and fifty-five injured. Among others who perished as victims to their own carelessness, forty-three persons were killed, and seven hundred and thirteen injured, when alighting from, or getting into, trains in motion; but it would be satisfactory to feel assured that the rough manner in which trains are often stopped at stations, and then, when the break is released, allowed to jerk back again a few feet, in no way contributed to this class of accidents. Again, seventy-two persons were killed, and forty injured, whilst passing over railways at level crossings—a fact which cannot be too widely made known. The number of cases reported which involved no personal injury, indicates the hairbreadth escapes which are being constantly met with. Thus, there were no fewer than eleven hundred and forty-nine failures of tires, any one of which might have entailed serious results; but it is only right to add that of these, eight hundred and forty-two were on wagons belonging to owners other than the railway Companies. The number of axles which failed was four hundred and fifty-one, of which two hundred and sixty-four were engine axles. In addition to these statistics, we

notice that during the year, thirty-four horses, sixty-three oxen and cows, one hundred and sixty-two sheep, one donkey, and fifteen hounds, were run over and killed; the number of trains concerned being one hundred and fifty-four; while two passengers and four servants were injured from this cause. This list is indeed sufficiently lengthy to indicate very great carelessness on the part of the occupiers of land adjoining the railway.

These figures sufficiently exemplify the risks of the railroad, and point the obvious moral, that by no possible precautions can railway travelling be rendered sufficiently safe to justify any persons from neglecting to insure themselves against death or injury; and at the same time the record clearly shows that the railway Companies must adopt every possible precaution against disaster. It is not enough that they should justify themselves by statistics as to the number of passengers, &c., who are not killed or injured, although that is very much the position they assume. Without going into comparisons at all, and without discussing the general excellence of the arrangements for the conduct of traffic, the number of accidents, fatal and otherwise, from preventable causes, is sufficiently great to justify a demand for increased vigilance on the part of the railway Companies, and, in some ways, the exercise of a less rigid economy in this direction.

The figures given in the Abstract of the Returns of sea casualties for the year 1881-82 are scarcely less instructive. Of these, the loss of life, on or near our own coasts, is the most important feature. Thus, in that twelvemonth, five hundred and fifty-nine British or colonial vessels were wrecked or damaged on or off the coasts of the United Kingdom; while the gross total of lives lost in them was three thousand nine hundred and seventy-eight, of which three thousand six hundred and twelve were crew, and three hundred and sixty-six passengers. These figures are the more ominous, since they show an alarming increase, the numbers for the year 1880-81 being five hundred and one vessels, and two thousand nine hundred and twenty-three lives, including two hundred and three passengers. In the year 1881-82, twenty foreign vessels, and seventy-six lives, were lost off our coasts. Against these figures we must set the number of four thousand and sixty-six lives saved from shipwreck during the same period. The number of lives lost by sea casualties abroad and reported, during the year 1881-82, was five hundred and fifty-nine in sixty-six British vessels on the coasts of British possessions; and one hundred and seventy-four in twenty-six British vessels on foreign coasts; while no fewer than two thousand two hundred and sixty-three were lost in two hundred and sixty British vessels in oceans and seas. These totals are lamentably high.

According to the wreck-chart for the year, it seems that the coast off Durham and Berwick was the most fateful; but all along our coastline, numerous black spots appropriately mark the scenes of fatal wrecks. It is indeed difficult to derive much comfort from these statistics. In spite of improvements in our lighthouses, life-boats, and lightships, and the march of the science of navigation, a greater number of lives are yearly lost at sea. Our own coasts, in

spite of our boasted advancement, and the character we claim to have earned for humanity, are terribly fatal, and yet little is done to remedy this state of things. Our markets attract an immense amount of shipping, and it seems to be imperative upon us to do what we can, by constructing harbours of refuge on all dangerous parts of our coasts, to lessen their terrors.

It is difficult to avoid being struck with the comparative indifference with which the news of the loss of a ship at some exposed and unprotected point is received, and the excitement caused by nearly every railway collision. The public seem to expend all their sympathy for the sailor, in advance; and while few people think of the risks of a railway journey, their fears and sympathies are proportionately heightened whenever anything untoward happens. Again, in the case of railways, the various Companies look after their own interests very keenly, and the public share the benefit to a certain extent. But the dangers of the deep are chiefly the concern of those who have to face them. There are no wealthy shipping Companies building spacious harbours in order to insure the safety of vessels and crew. The precautions taken in the matter of boats and life-saving apparatus are merely those required by the regulations, and it is left for private munificence to do the rest. But for the National Lifeboat Institution, indeed, the death-roll would be enormously increased; but great and varied as its work is, it seems high time that our national obligations in this matter were reconsidered.

ONE FALSE, BOTH FAIR;

OR, A HARD KNOT.

BY JOHN B. HARWOOD.

CHAPTER XXXI.—THE DECLARATION OF WAR.

'MR PONTIFEX, My Lady!' Such was the smoothly spoken announcement of the soft-treading servant-in-chief whose ministrings were confined to the state apartments of Leominster House. And then, with quick, brisk step, and bright eyes all attentive to the work in hand, the busy lawyer entered, coming like a blast of fresh wholesome air into that enervating atmosphere of serene languor that prevailed in the great half-used London palace. It was easy to see, by the fashion of the announcement, that the names of Pounce and Pontifex stood high in servile estimation; and indeed the domestics of a great family entertain a sort of awe for family solicitors, as if they were high-priests of the Isis of Law, and could, if they were angered, remove the veil—a veil, it may be, with all sorts of ugly secrets and awkward disclosures behind it. Nothing, indeed, varies more oddly than the degree of respect with which the learned professions are treated. I have seen courtly doctors trip into a house, confident of as reverential a greeting as ever angur found in Athens or Rome when the plague was raging, and the shrines crowded, and the altars heaped with votive gifts. And I have known Medicine, in country districts of Southern England, meekly hitch its horse's bridle over a rusted nail, and slink in at the back-door,

to earn a half-crown fee and the profit on some pink draughts from the surgery, by prescribing for a feverish child. So it is with attorneys. There are some of them who get but an unceremonious reception and an impatient hearing from clients not as yet too sorely pinched by the proverbial shoe that suitors wear as they plod along the rugged road to where Themis stands waiting, with her blinded eyes and her sword and her scales.

Mr Pontifex, of the widely known firm of Pounce and Pontifex, belonged to the cream of the profession, and was most deservedly treated with corresponding respect. It was not very often that he paid a professional visit. More commonly, his clients went to him. His presence, then, at Leominster House was of itself a compliment to that great historical House of the Lords Marchers for which Pounce and Pontifex had buckled on legal armour so often. There was no question, then, of delays and of a smuggled interview in some library or disused study; but the lawyer was ushered direct into the great gloomy reception room—the Red Room, according to the sage housekeeper's catalogue—where his golden-haired client, and dapper Lord Putney, and benign Lady Barbara, were together in conclave.

'Your Ladyship's note mentioned,' said Mr Pontifex, after the first salutations had been exchanged, and as he took the chair that was offered to him, 'that you would almost immediately be leaving London for Castel Vawr.—And I arranged my engagements so as to be able to have a word or two with you, Lady Leominster, previous to your departure, on a matter of much moment.'

Mr Pontifex's manner was serious and business-like, but quite free from any trace of embarrassment. He was always at his ease with great folks, having found that Earls, Viscounts, and Duchesses thought and felt, when anxious about money and matrimony, the scrapes of their sons and the settlements of their daughters, very much like the untitled and unknown.

'I should be in the way—I'd better go,' said Lord Putney, gracefully rising and preparing to take his leave.

'I see no occasion for that. Ladies, my lord, are always the better for the counsel of a gentleman,' returned Lady Barbara, stiff, but smiling.

'Pray, stop with us, Lord Putney,' almost whispered the other lady; 'pray, do not go. Nothing which concerns us—concerns me—should be kept a secret from you now,' she added, so prettily and with so sweet a droop of her lovely eyes, that the delighted old beau could not refrain from kissing the tips of his bejewelled fingers and waving them towards the beautiful speaker; just as exquisites and dandies, his contemporaries, had done when Cerito danced and Jenny Lind sang, and Lady Blessington and Count D'Orsay arbitrated over Fashion. From all which, and from the steady smile that Lady Barbara wore, just as a ship is dressed with gay-coloured flags on festal occasions, it may be gathered that Lord Putney's betrothal to the mistress of Leominster House had been made public, and might now be announced by the discreetest of newspapers. The secret had indeed been ill kept. Lord Putney himself, where his own vanity was in question,

was a very sieve, incapable of keeping back the information, which he imparted to a score or so of friends. And then the Society journals, bold and pert as London sparrows, bluntly published the banns of marriage between the noble young widow and her elderly bachelor admirer; and it was thought that a confirmation rather than a contradiction of the rumour was desirable.

'I should be sorry to be the cause of banishing Lord Putney, I am sure,' said Mr Pontifex, with the faintest possible twinkle in his eye, as he glanced at that nobleman, of whose peculiarities and worldly status he had heard a good deal. He was no client of his. It was on the shelves of Messrs Hawke and Heronshaw that the jappaned deed boxes, with the name of the Right Hon. George Augustus, Viscount Putney, reposed; but Mr Pontifex had the affairs of the House of Leominster too thoroughly within his cognisance to anticipate that the profitable business of that noble family should be transferred to another firm. And Lord Putney had seventy thousand a year, at the lowest computation; notoriously did not owe a shilling; bore a character as spotless as his own dainty shirt-front; and was altogether a desirable wooer.

'Then I'll stay; but nobody must expect advice from me worth having,' said Lord Putney, with youthful playfulness. 'When it comes to matters of business, I am as helpless as a child. John Doe and Richard Roe, as heroes of fiction, were always much admired by me; but I regret to learn that these imaginary personages, whom I used to dream of as a sort of Robin Hood and Little John, clad in Lincoln Green, have been ruthlessly swept away; and with them, I am afraid all the poetry of Law has departed. The rest of it, Lady Barbara, seems to me a mere jangle of repetitions about tenements and messuages and parcels of land and sums of money, and tenants-in-tail and remainder-men. I wonder,' added his lordship softly, 'what a remainder-man looks like—something very shabby and hungry, I should say. But this is mere conjecture, and I am taking up this gentleman's valuable time.'

Mr Pontifex, who probably knew the value of his time remarkably well, smiled urbanely. 'I should not have been here to-day,' he remarked blandly, 'but that I thought it best, before Lady Leominster, and you, Lady Barbara, left London, to inform you precisely how we stand. Of course, for some time past it has been my duty to inform the Marchioness that a storm was brewing, an attack being prepared. Now, I am here to mention the fact, not alarming, but important, that the attack has really begun, and that the first shot has been fired by the enemy.'

The young lady became strangely agitated. She could not avoid it. She could not help the fact that her little white fingers clutched the arm of her chair, or that her fair young face grew anxious and alarmed.

Lady Barbara looked as a Montgomery might have looked when panting messengers came rushing to the stronghold on the steep to tell how the bare-footed, white-mantled Welsh were spreading havoc through the country, marching in force on Castel Vawr. She had a full share of the courage of her race, and would have been ready then, with mangonel and arblast and falconet on

the strong stone battlements, to receive the onset of the furious clans from the West. We fight now with the help of paid advocates, not of paid men-at-arms, and in costly law-courts, not on fields of battle, over which hover, screaming and croaking, hawk, raven, and carrion-crow. But Lady Barbara was quite ready, in purse and person, for either contingency. She was the first to speak.

'You mean, Mr Pontifex——?' she said.

Mr Pontifex, who was secretly proud of having used a neatly figurative expression, and who had forgotten that ladies seldom or never enjoy a metaphor, proceeded to explain. 'I mean,' he said, 'that Miss Cora Carew and her legal adviser Mr Sterling have at last plucked up courage—if I may without offence employ so homely an expression—to commence formal proceedings in support of your Ladyship's sister's claim. Regular notice of action has been given, and the case, in the form of a plea for ejectment, to be tried at the winter assize at Marchbury.'

'Why at Marchbury?' asked his youthful client, bending eagerly forward.

'Because,' answered the smiling lawyer, 'Castel Vawr—for the recovery of which, and of the rents, for life, accruing from the estate, the action is brought—lies within the compass of the circuit. We could get the *venue* changed, I daresay, on application to the judges who are to try the case; but I scarcely see why we should not fight it out, as I may say, on our own ground.'

So thought Lady Barbara, and so she said. Her warlike ancestors, ever loyal to the king, had ridden many a time into Marchbury with trampling horse and lance in rest, after defeating wild Welshmen or English rebels, and had possibly clattered through those stony and picturesque streets, with Cromwell's pursuing cavalry in chase; and the name of the ancient town was dear to her. The present holder of Castel Vawr was quite ready to submit to the opinion of Lady Barbara and of Mr Pontifex. But Lord Putney arched his delicately pencilled eyebrows into the pointed form, and peered through his gold-rimmed eyeglass somewhat anxiously at the lawyer. It had been that nobleman's ambition to be a butterfly, exempt from the common cares and troubles of coarse worldlings, and scarcely deigning to sip his share of nectar from the golden goblets that mantle and froth for Olympians such as he. But, for all that, the Right Hon. George Augustus had complicated affairs to attend to, a great London and Middlesex property, a large acreage of pasture and barleycroft in Hertfordshire, to drive in hand, so to speak; and had he not been a shrewder man of business than it pleased him to be thought, he would have been a far poorer lord than he was. As a rule, when a man professes to be a perfect child about money, it is as well to beware of that man, as of a wolf in sheep's clothing. But Lord Putney meant no harm. All his foibles were self-contained, and his besetting sin was vanity.

'Marchbury, then, let it be,' said Mr Pontifex, smiling; and indeed solicitors, like surgeons and dentists, have a trick of smiling when the moment of action draws near. 'We have secured, as was our duty, very high professional assistance: the Attorney-general, Sir Richard—whose reputation, I am sure, Lady Barbara, is known to you.'

'Sir Richard Savage is very clever, and a fine speaker, in and out of parliament, I believe,' said Lady Barbara approvingly.

'And he will have colleagues worthy of him,' cheerily rejoined Mr Pontifex; 'barristers less brilliant and renowned, but great in their own lines—Mr Mudford, Q.C.; Serjeant Flowers, always good for a jury; and that invaluable black-letter man, Mr Grubb, to whose dictum as to precedents and points of law their lordships listen with respect. We shall be well represented, you see.'

'Flowers—Serjeant Flowers,' repeated Lord Putney, as if consulting his memory. 'You know best, Mr Pontifex, and I have only a hearsay acquaintance with such topics, but is not that learned gentleman a bit of a buffoon?'

'Quite so, my lord,' answered Mr Pontifex, unabashed. 'But it generally answers, for cross-examination of nervous witnesses, to have a light comedian amongst the heavier metal of one's forensic artillery. And it is a point to make the jury laugh at some stage of the proceedings. Yes; we shall be strong, very strong. The opposite side, however, will not be weak. There will be a contest of eloquence, and, what matters more, of learning and of skill.'

Lady Barbara's strongly marked features wore an expression of deep disgust. 'I am surprised,' she said scornfully, 'that any but the dregs of the profession should be brazen-faced enough to come into open court and champion a claim so shameless, so monstrous, as this. I thought better of the Bar of England than to believe it possible.'

The younger lady grew perceptibly paler. Lord Putney said something, that was meant to be reassuring, to her in a low tone, and then pricked up his ears, as if eager to hear more. Mr Pontifex seemed to feel as though it were incumbent on him to extenuate the celestial ire of that haughty Diana, his esteemed client, Lady Barbara Montgomery, against the peccant barristers of England.

'It is a pity,' he said smoothly, and as though apologising for the delinquents; 'but professional etiquette does not allow a counsel to pick and choose. Sir Simon Skinner, my friend Mr Huddleston, Mr Beamish, and Mr Grouter, are against us. Sir Simon, a very eminent lawyer, I need hardly say, was Attorney-general of the late, as Sir Richard is of the present government, as I daresay Lord Putney will remember.'

Lord Putney, however, did not choose to remember. 'I know nothing of these subjects,' he said innocently. 'I was only once in my life in a court of law; and I was dreadfully bored, and I think I caught cold—indeed, I am sure I did—on account of a broken window. I trust they will be very particular as to draughts, if we are all to be personally present at the winter assize at Marchbury, which has a bleak, chilly sound of itself.'

After this, not much more was said relative to business, and Mr Pontifex shortly took his leave. He could not but notice that his pretty client was unusually silent, and that her eyes wore a dreamy look, as though her thoughts were far away.

'Your Ladyship leaves town to-morrow?' asked the solicitor, as he rose to go.

'No; the day after to-morrow,' replied Lady Barbara. 'We shall see you, I hope, at Castel Vawr.'

FRENCH CONVICT MARRIAGES.

WHEN an English criminal leaves a dock under a long sentence of penal servitude, it may be taken for granted that he has before him years during which, to use Lord Coleridge's expression, his condition will be that of a slave. He may earn some slight privileges by good conduct, and a ticket-of-leave after he has served three-fourths of his sentence; but his lot whilst he remains a prisoner will be a hard one.

In France, the case with a criminal is very different. His crime may be of the blackest; it may have revolted the whole country, and have goaded millions to clamour for vengeance against the perpetrator; and yet it may be that before the public outcry against him has ceased, the French criminal, convicted and punished with a long sentence, will be leading a life of ease as a free farmer with his wife and children in New Caledonia.

The new French system of transportation was inaugurated in 1872, when the fifteen thousand political prisoners sentenced for participation in the Commune had to be disposed of. At that date the old *bagnes* (seaport convict prisons) were abolished, and the government, actuated by a humane desire to undertake the moral reform of convicts, framed an entirely new penal code. The *bagnes* had been horrible dens, in which prisoners were treated like caged wild beasts; they were kept chained in couples, and there was no regular system of rewards by which well-behaved men could hope to earn a mitigation of their punishment and conditional release. When the National Assembly decided that New Caledonia should be converted into a convict settlement, it was resolved that criminals should be offered every inducement to behave well. It seems to have been thought that as they were to be transported so far from the mother-country, there could be no objection to letting them go free as soon as possible, provided they would labour industriously in their island home as husbandmen or mechanics. Philanthropists were not wanting who contended that crimes proceeded either from brain disease or from the cerebral agitation caused by the arduous struggle for livelihood in an over-peopled community; and that most criminals would be cured of their madness or wickedness, as the case might be, if they were set to live under healthy conditions. M. Jules Simon, who was Minister of Public Instruction from 1870 to 1873, had for many years been numbered among the most energetic advocates of prison-reform, and it was chiefly in accordance with his views that convicts were sent to New Caledonia, and became entitled to earn there by good conduct tickets-of-leave, grants of land, and the right to marry, or—if they were already married—the right to have their wives and families sent out from France at state expense to live with them.

An interesting Report has lately been published by the French Ministry of Justice, giving an account of the convict *ménages*—that is, of couples

who have been married in the colony, and of those who have merely been re-joined there. As to these last, the cases of some couples with children have been very pitiable. Government undertakes to transport the wives of convicts who have earned tickets-of-leave, and also their children, provided these are not more than eight years old. It has often happened, therefore, that a wife has had to choose between her husband and children; and the choice when once made in the husband's favour, cannot be retracted. The woman who goes out to her husband in New Caledonia does so with the full knowledge that she will never be allowed to leave the colony so long as her husband is alive, for he can only obtain a ticket-of-leave upon undertaking never to leave the colony. She is transported there on the understanding that she shall create a home for her husband, and she is debarred from taking out children older than eight, because they might thwart instead of assisting her in this design. It is obvious that children ought not to be introduced into a penal colony when they are of age to feel very strongly the degradation of a convict parent's position. It is judged, moreover, that if ill-bred boys and girls in their teens came out to the colony as free immigrants, they would look down upon children born in the convict settlement; and caste differences being thus inaugurated, perpetual quarrels would result. On the other hand, a humane order has been made that the grown-up children of a convict—daughters at eighteen, sons at twenty-one—might go out to their father at their own expense, either on a visit, or to remain permanently.

It speaks well for wifely devotion that a no inconsiderable number of women should have petitioned to be sent out to their husbands, and among these voluntary exiles were persons of all classes. It is believed that a change will take place in this respect when M. Naquet's Divorce Bill becomes law, for a clause of it provides that the consort of a person sentenced to ten years' penal servitude—which in France entails transportation—may obtain divorce as a matter of right by applying for it within one year of the sentence. However, it is mere conjecture at present to say that applications for divorce will be extensively made. So far, many cases of touching fidelity have come to light; for women who were only engaged, not married to convicts, have prayed to be transported, and have used every whit of influence they could set in motion to obtain this sad favour. It is generally refused; for bachelor convicts who get licensed to marry are required to choose their wives from among well-behaved female convicts; nevertheless, a girl will be allowed to go out to New Caledonia to fulfil a matrimonial engagement, if she can furnish unquestionable references as to character and pay her own passage out. She must also procure permission from her parents, just as if she were going to be married in France.

It should be mentioned, that married women who voluntarily undergo transportation are bound, before leaving France, to appoint respectable guardians for the children whom they may leave behind; and it must be proved to the satisfaction of the authorities that these guardians are able as well as willing to provide the children intrusted to them with a good education.

The marriages in which the bride and bridegroom were both convicts have exceeded six hundred since 1873. They constitute no actual innovation in prison-life, but are merely a return to the practice that prevailed before the great Revolution, when the French colonies used to be recruited with convicts, who had been released from the galleys on condition of their marrying women who had been inmates of jails. When the French were owners of Louisiana and Canada, a large number of married *forçats* were sent out yearly to settle in those dependencies; and not long before the beginning of the Seven Years' War, the Duke de Choiseul, who was Premier and Minister of Marine, requested the High Chancellor to direct that judges would sentence able-bodied young men to the galleys, rather than to simple imprisonment, whenever possible, 'because His Majesty's Plantations had need of fresh settlers.' In consequence of this, during the next few years young men were transported for the merest peccadillos, even for drunkenness and street-brawling. It became a rule to give the recruiting sergeant the first pick of youngsters who got into trouble, and to ship off the others to America with no loss of time. Young women were transported with an equal want of discrimination, when they brought themselves in any way under reproach. In the Abbé Prévost's painful novel of *Manon Lescaut*, we have a description of a convoy of female prisoners, none of whom were criminals, being conveyed to Brest in carts *en route* for America.

Nowadays, it is of course required of a convict-bride that she should have been—legally speaking, at least—a criminal of a very bad kind; no female prisoner is, in fact, eligible for transportation unless she shall have been sentenced to seven years' penal servitude. Twice every year, a notice is posted up in the workshops of the female convict prisons—of which that at Clermont is the principal—that any woman under thirty years of age who has served two years of her sentence, may petition to be transported, provided that on arriving in New Caledonia she consents to marry a convict. Obviously, women who have been sentenced for seven years only, and who may by good conduct obtain a remission of two years at home, have not much interest in getting transported during the third year of their punishment; so it is not unusual to offer such women the option of transportation within six months after their sentence. As a rule, however, those who put down their names on the transport lists have been condemned to very long terms. It is not said that any favouritism is shown in the selections, the number of candidates fulfilling all the required conditions being too few to allow the authorities much range of choice; but it is certain that the heinousness of a woman's antecedents is never held to disqualify her so long as she is young and strong; and this no doubt must seem hard to women who, owing to physical infirmities, or from being just over age, cannot claim the same indulgence as younger ones.

The *déportées* are treated with kindness on their passage out; they have new kits given to them; and they do not wear the regular convict garb, but a sort of peasant costume with an ample brown cloak and hood. On landing at Noumea, they are consigned to a house of detention for a month.

or two, and during that time their marriages are arranged for them through the agency of officials, through the chaplains of the female prison and the male penitentiary, and through the wardresses, who are nuns. Nothing is done in a hurry or with any brutal disregard of a woman's feelings; indeed, many ordinary marriages of free people in France are projected with less caution than these convict unions. The Marriage Board (*Bureau des Ménages*)—consisting of the governor of the colony, two magistrates, two priests, and the matron of the female prison—make themselves acquainted with all the antecedents of the parties who are to be married; and they try as far as possible to plan matches between individuals whose tempers fit them to live together. To the credit of the authorities, it must be said that they are particular as to the tempers of the men whom they select for marriage, and never choose a man who is notorious for having a savage, ruffianly disposition, or for being addicted to drink.

When it has been decided, after due inquiry, that a couple—say A. and B.—may be united, it is sought to excite in each of the parties an interest in the other. A. is told all about the past life of B., and *vice versa*; they are also shown each other's photographs. Then, if the parties do not object to meet, an appointment is made; and they generally see each other in the parlour of the female prison in presence of the matron. As to this, however, the manner of interviews varies; for the matron and chaplains may arrange matters as they please, so that everything be done with propriety. The intended bridegroom is always in possession of a cottage and a plot of land; for he cannot marry until it is proved that he can maintain himself out of the produce of his holding, eked out by the wages he may receive as a labourer on public works. Naturally, he is not compelled to take the bride whom the authorities have designated for him. If she pleases him at first sight, he generally sees her two or three times more before a regular engagement is made. She goes to visit his cottage in company with a nun, or some employment is given her out of doors in laundry or dairy, where she may be seen in comparative freedom. When at last the engagement is concluded, the intended bride goes and spends a few days at the convent of Our Lady of Mercy, held by the Augustine nuns; and it is there that the marriage takes place with the smallest amount of publicity possible. If the parties cannot afford to buy a gold wedding-ring, a silver one is provided for them. After their marriage, the convict couple become probationary free colonists under certain conditions: they must dress in brown; they must not enter any establishment where intoxicating liquors are sold; and they must not leave their cottage after nightfall without a written permit. These and other restrictions are gradually removed in reward for good conduct—till at last the *libéré conditionnel* becomes a free settler and proprietor of his piece of land.

It takes about five years to attain full freedom, dating from the time when the convict got his first ticket-of-leave; and once free, he may engage in industrial or commercial pursuits, open a shop or set up a factory if he have the means. But he must never leave the colony. The children born of convict marriages are to remain in New

Caledonia until they are twenty-one years of age, at which time an inducement will be offered to the sons to settle definitely in the colony by exempting them from military service. But those who prefer to go to France will of course be allowed to do so, taking the chances common to all Frenchmen of being drafted by conscription for the army. At present, the oldest children of convict marriages in the colony are only in their eighth year.

It has happened more than once that female prisoners sent out to marry convicts have won the affections of minor colonial officials. The government Report states that within eight years more than twenty applications for leave to marry *déportées* were made by warders, army sergeants, dockyard inspectors, &c. The first of these applications threw the authorities into great perplexity. They saw that to allow a convict-woman to marry a free man was tantamount to restoring her to full liberty. On the other hand, it seemed unadvisable to them to let a prisoner wed a man who, by-and-by, when the first ardour of love had cooled, might taunt her about opprobrious by-gones. However, the first man who fell in love with a convict-girl was so much in earnest about it that he carried his point by signing an engagement to live subject to all the rules imposed upon ticket-of-leave men, and never to leave the colony. Similar engagements have been demanded since of all the men who wish to marry *déportées*, and in every case they have been subscribed to.

It is as yet too soon to predict anything as to the future of New Caledonia under its convict settlers; but this point may already be noted, that there is not a single recorded case of a convict having been punished during the two years immediately following his marriage—that is, during the time when he was forbidden to enter public-houses. All offences committed by married convicts—assaults, attempts at sedition, &c.—appear to have been perpetrated after their good conduct had earned them the right to re-enter the drink-shop.

OUR GOVERNESS.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

'I WONDER what she'll be like!'

'I hope she won't be stricter than Miss Simmons.'

'If she can't speak English, what fun it will be!'

These three remarks were the utterances of three pairs of children's lips upon the afternoon of the day fixed for the arrival of our new French governess. The three children were mine. I had kept the two girls from boarding-school on principle; and Bobby, the boy, was too young as yet, so I had engaged a French governess in the place of a certain Miss Simmons, who, being pretty, had captivated our curate, and had married him.

'If the children don't learn anything else,' I had said to my wife, 'they shall learn French; and from experience, I have found out that French can only be picked up at the fountain-head.' So, after much advertising and bother, Mademoiselle René Dulong appeared to possess

the necessary qualifications; and she was to come to my residence, Acacia Lodge, Hampton, straight from Paris.

I don't suppose that my children were much worse than those of other people, but they required to be held firmly in hand; and the late Miss Simmons' time had been so taken up with billing and cooing, that she had suffered them to get a bit more unruly than I cared to see them, so I made it a *sine qua non* in my advertisement, that candidates should be disciplinarians. In this respect, as indeed in all others, Mademoiselle Dulong's testimonials were unimpeachable, and I shared the feelings of the children, and anticipated her arrival with no little impatience and curiosity.

Long before three o'clock, when she was due, chubby fingers had been disturbing the symmetry of our Venetian blinds, and curious eyes had been peering through the apertures thus created, in the hopes of getting the earliest possible look at the new preceptress; and precisely to the minute, when a cab drove up with a modest heap of foreign luggage on the roof, the excitement culminated in a chorus of 'Here she is!'

Mademoiselle Dulong alighted from the cab, and was ushered into the drawing-room. Of course, I had pictured her previously in my mind's eye, and equally, of course, the real was as unlike the ideal as could be. Instead of a large woman with a square jaw and a determined brow, we were in the presence of a slightly-built, fair-haired woman of twenty-five, neatly yet coquettishly dressed in black, well gloved and well booted, as is usual with her country-women of all classes. There was none of the diffidence and timidity about her for which one might naturally look in a young woman landing for the first time on an alien soil. Without being in the smallest degree forward or bold, she advanced smilingly and shook our proffered hands with a confidence which seemed to insure future friendliness between us, addressed a few words to us in excellent English, and seemed determined to start at once by being at home.

As I got accustomed to her, I saw that delicate as her face was, it was full of determination. It was not a pretty face—there was too much chin, and the cheek-bones were too prominent; yet her face and figure were of the kind that, with a little mechanical aid in the way of good dressing, might pass for distinguished, and by many people might be deemed attractive.

I was curious to see how she would meet the children; and was delighted when she kissed them and spoke a few familiar words to them in French. 'For,' she said, 'I intend to enter upon my duties at once.' Even Bobby, who had not anticipated her arrival with any very marked signs of pleasure, was smitten, and declared that she was worth a dozen Miss Simmonses. By tea-time she had unpacked her things, and had settled down at Acacia Lodge as if she had been a member of the household for as many years as she had actually been hours.

The favourable impression that both my wife and I had formed of her at first was fully confirmed by better acquaintance. Not only did she prove herself an admirable ruler and teacher, but, my wife being somewhat of an invalid, Mademoiselle, as we called her, assumed the

reins of household management. Even the servants learned to respect and like her, which fact, when the usual attitude assumed by the British Mary-Jane towards governesses, especially foreign governesses, is taken into consideration, alone speaks volumes in her favour. The name of Mademoiselle became invested with all the influence hitherto associated with the name of Mistress. It was now: 'Mademoiselle says so,' 'Mademoiselle knows all about it,' 'Ask Mademoiselle.' But it must not be inferred from this that she was gradually usurping the position of an artful schemer; for there was no undue assumption of authority, there was nothing overbearing in her demeanour. Everything was done quietly and unostentatiously, and with the full consent of my wife, who was glad enough to deliver over a part of her duties into the hands of an efficient substitute. As for me, being a pottering old antiquary whose mind was wrapped up in the deciphering of inscriptions, in the tracing of Roman remains, in controversies concerning the age of flint and the age of bronze, I was perfectly content inasmuch as I was no longer bothered and disturbed by having to meddle with domestic concerns.

At the same time, there was a mystery about her. Her correspondence was extensive, and so far as handwriting was any indication, it appeared to be entirely from the opposite sex. She never alluded to friends or relations. We could find out nothing about her antecedents except from the testimonials she had forwarded in answer to my advertisement. She never seemed dull, but settled down into our grooves of life happily and contentedly. She had plenty of leisure, if she chose to make use of it; but I noticed nothing coquettish in her behaviour with my neighbours, though some of them remarked upon the 'pretty little Frenchwoman' staying with me. Nor did I suspect that she held personal interviews with any member of the opposite sex, until one or two circumstances happened which knocked the dust off my eyes a bit.

The first eye-opener was on a fine, bright April morning. Isalen, my second girl, came tumbling into my study as I was busy upon a paper descriptive of a certain Roman Camp, her great brown eyes opened to their fullest extent, and her face flushed with excitement.

'O papa!' she began, 'what do you think? Me and Awdrey was out just now on the green, and who do you think we should see talking to a gentleman under the trees in Maid of Honour Walk, but Mademoiselle!'

'Mademoiselle talking to a man!' I repeated. 'Nonsense, child; you must be mistaken.'

'O no, papa; I'm not,' said the child emphatically, 'for we could see them quite plain, although they didn't see us. And the man was tall, and had a big fur-cloak on, and had black moustaches; and she gave him a lot of papers, and he seemed very pleased.'

'Perhaps it was Monsieur Cerise from the Grammar-school,' I suggested; but this was repudiated by Isalen, who knew Monsieur Cerise perfectly well by sight.

'Well, never mind,' I said; 'it's no business of ours; so run away and play, there's a good child; I'm very busy.'

At the same time, I was as surprised as was

the child. I tried to fix my attention upon my subject, but Mademoiselle and the stranger planted themselves in front of me at every line. Yet I don't know why I should have been so surprised; for Mademoiselle was young and striking-looking, if not absolutely a beauty; and young, striking-looking women do not condemn themselves to the life of a cloister unless they can help it.

However, she said nothing more to me about it, and other events drove it out of my mind temporarily, until another curious circumstance occurred.

Old resident as I was at Hampton, and familiar as I was with every nook and corner of the old palace and its grounds, I never wearied of it, and one of my keenest enjoyments was to play the part of cicerone to strangers. Often and often I would while away the sweet hours of summer mornings amidst the trim terraces and flower-beds planted by Dutch William, or under the shady old trees which, had they the gift of speech, could tell so many stories of old-world pageant and courtship. One morning I took the children into the gardens for a holiday, leaving Mademoiselle, as I thought, at home arranging domestic matters with my wife. We wandered about for a long time in the cool shade of the Wilderness, until we found ourselves in the Maze. I was a walking guide-book to every other part of the gardens, but I had neglected the Maze, as making too great a demand upon my otherwise occupied faculties, so that we were dodging and running against each other for a full twenty minutes ere we struck the direct path to the centre. Bobby was ahead, and just as we turned round the last piece of hedge, he stopped short, with his finger on his lips, and holding me by the coat-sleeve, pointed to the open space in the middle. There, on the seat, I saw Mademoiselle in earnest conversation with a man who answered exactly to the description given by Isalen some weeks previously; and they were so deeply absorbed, that they did not hear the sounds of our feet on the gravel. It certainly did not give me the idea of a love-scene; for the man was talking excitedly, although in a low voice, gesticulating wildly, and Mademoiselle seemed to be trying to put in a word without success. Between them on the seat lay a bundle of papers, and from the way in which they were frequently tapped and pointed to, it was clear that they formed the topic of conversation.

Unwilling to lose the scene, unwilling to intrude upon other people's business, I stood undecided. My children were for bursting forward and surprising Mademoiselle, but I restrained them; and in spite of my natural antipathy to anything in the shape of espionage and eavesdropping, endeavoured to catch something of the conversation going on. All I could make out were the few following words spoken by Mademoiselle: 'Very well. You want ten thousand francs. You must have it. I must see what I can do, as it is urgent; but I can make no promises.' That was all I heard, so, fearful lest my curiosity should betray me, I hurried back out of the Maze as silently and quickly as possible. 'What on earth does it

mean?' I thought, as we turned homewards. 'Ten thousand francs; that's four hundred pounds. How is *she* going to get such a sum?'

Mademoiselle appeared at the tea-table calm and collected as usual, without a token in her manner or appearance that anything out of the ordinary had taken place. I had a great mind to speak to her about what we had seen in the Maze at Hampton Court; but upon reconsideration, I was not sure that it was any business of mine, so I did not. As an antiquary, of course, my chief occupation and pleasure was the solution of mysteries, and here was one at my very door. As I walked in the garden that evening with my pipe, according to custom, I pondered over the matter; and the more I pondered, the more befogged I got. For what purpose was such a sum as ten thousand francs wanted, and who was the gentleman who so vehemently pressed for it? I think I had a right to know, after all, as Mademoiselle was for the time being a member of my household and under my protection. Had she been separated from a bad husband, whose plan of revenge it was to follow and persecute her for money? I walked up and down the gravel path for more than an hour, endeavouring to solve the problem, but without success. I was on the point of turning for the last time towards the house, when I heard a rustling amidst the thicket of laurel which separated my garden from a back road. There had been numerous burglaries in the neighbourhood lately, so that my first idea naturally was that an attempt was to be made upon my premises. I turned sharply round; and as I did so, the sound ceased. But I could see nothing. I am not a coward, but I confess to a feeling of uneasiness at this mysterious sound within a few paces of me. I was unarmed, too, so that to rush into the thicket would have been rash self-exposure. I determined to go to the house and arm myself, and had taken two paces in that direction, when I heard a voice ask in a foreign accent: 'Does Mademoiselle Dulong live here?'

I turned round and could make out a tall figure entirely cloaked, but it was too dark for me to see his face. 'Yes, she does. What do you want with her?' I replied; but ere I had finished my sentence, my mysterious visitor had disappeared.

I returned to the house more mystified than ever, and resolved to address Mademoiselle upon the subject the first thing next morning. Accordingly after breakfast, as she was going to the schoolroom as usual, I told her that I should like to speak to her alone in my study. She followed me thither. I began by relating what I had seen and heard in the Hampton Court Maze a little time before, and I noticed that as I proceeded, the colour on Mademoiselle's cheek deepened, and her manner became excitable and uneasy.

When I had finished, and was about to pass on to the event of the previous night, she said: 'I am very glad indeed, sir, that you have spoken to me about this. I have been longing to tell you ever since, but have not dared to; but since you have broached the subject, I can speak openly and without reserve. You heard mention of ten

thousand francs. That man who was speaking to me has been a terror to us for years. He alludes to an old debt owing to him by my father, late a colonel in the French army; and he persecuted me so for it, that I was obliged to come here. I don't know where I can get ten thousand francs or the quarter of it; and until I can satisfy him at least by a part payment, as he has found out that I live here, I can hope for no peace.'

She spoke with so much earnestness, and was so visibly pained by the confession, that I was moved.

'You see, sir,' she resumed, 'it will take me many years to save up ten thousand francs.'

'But,' I said, 'is there no other member of your family capable of working for a living?'

'Not one, sir,' she replied; 'my father is bed-ridden, and my mother has to be with him night and day. One brother was killed at Gravelotte, and the other is in Algeria.'

'And this man requires immediate payment?' I said.

'Well, sir,' replied the girl, 'of course the sooner I can get it off, the sooner my persecution will end.'

I walked up and down the room for a few moments, then went out and consulted my wife, desiring Mademoiselle to remain. When I returned, I said: 'Suppose I advance you this sum, what guarantee can I have that it will be—you must excuse my saying it, Mademoiselle, but business is business—that it will be applied to the end you mention? I should like, of course, to have a receipt from this creditor in person.'

'You shall see him,' said the girl with enthusiasm, 'to-day, in an hour, when you will. O sir, how can I thank you enough for this! But I will repay you—you shall see how I will;' and she threw herself at my feet, with such tears in her eyes, and such gratitude on her face, that had I been a few years younger, and had my wife entered the room at the moment, I could have pardoned her for being jealous.

After dinner, when I was in my study, Mademoiselle knocked and entered, bringing with her the man I had seen in the Maze at Hampton Court.

I certainly was not struck with his personal appearance when I came to be face to face with him; for, although he was well and even expensively dressed, his figure and features seemed to me better suited to a blouse and a clay-pipe than to broadcloth.

'You are the creditor of Mademoiselle,' I said, 'for the sum of ten thousand francs?'

'I am, monsieur,' he replied, with a bow which struck me as being half-insolent and half-obsequious.

'And you intend to give her no peace,' I continued, 'until you have wrung this large sum from her?'

'Pardon, monsieur,' he said; 'I am a poor man; the debt has been outstanding for ten years, and I have allowed both her and her father all the latitude a poor man can be reasonably expected to allow. This is the first time I have threatened Mademoiselle, and if I myself were not pressed, I should not do it now.'

'But surely,' I said, 'you can temper mercy with your acts. You know that Mademoiselle is a poor, hard-working woman, and that it must necessarily be a long time before she can hope to pay so large a sum. Why not let her pay you in instalments?'

'Because, monsieur,' replied the man, 'I have immediate need of the money. I am secretary of a bank, and I have borrowed the bank's money, and unless I can replace it before the half-yearly balance sheet is made up, I shall be disgraced and ruined.'

This seemed reasonable enough; somehow, I felt impelled to the transaction; so, after a little further conversation, I wrote him a cheque on my bankers for four hundred pounds, taking his receipt in full.

One part of the mystery about Mademoiselle, however, still remained unsolved—the nocturnal visitor in the garden. I asked her about him; but she knew nothing, saying that he was possibly an agent of her creditor, who had come to make sure of her place of residence. She seemed, however, a little uneasy ever afterwards, and was never so willing to go beyond the gates as she had been.

Summer drew to a close, and we had arranged to go for our usual outing on the continent; Mademoiselle and the children upon this occasion to accompany us. She was overjoyed at the prospect, and set to work at her preparations with alacrity.

About a week before our departure, my wife came in to me and complained of the continual presence of a man outside in the road, who seemed to be vastly interested in our house and all that went on there. The next day we were going out to dine, and were passing through the gates, when my wife said: 'There he is, that man leaning over the railings smoking a cigar.'

I saw a tall individual in a long cloak, and instinctively my night visitor of many weeks previous came into my mind. I do not know why, for I never saw the man's face, but there was something in the tall, heavily-draped figure of the loungers before me which recalled him.

The next day he was a little farther off. I gave information to the police the day before we started, and I heard afterwards that he disappeared. This new mystery now occupied me. I felt sure that Mademoiselle was in some way connected with it, and I went away full of it, and wondering what it would turn out to be.

A PLEA FOR THE MOLE.

BY ONE WHO HAS STUDIED ITS HABITS.

IN introducing this much persecuted and, I believe, underrated little animal to the notice of your readers, I hope that my humble appeal in his behalf may have the effect of placing him and his family in a more favourable position than he has hitherto held in the estimation of the general public.

The mole is peculiar in its construction. Its body is thick and round, the fore-part being thickest and very muscular; and its legs are so very short that the animal seems to lie flat, and as

it rests in this position, the four feet appear as if they immediately lay sprawling from the body. The feet are furnished with five fingers, each surmounted by a strong nail or claw, and they are turned outwards and backwards, like the hands of a man when swimming. The shortness, breadth, and strength of the fore-feet or hands, which are inclined outwards, answer the purposes of digging, serving to throw back the earth with great ease. The mole is furnished with what might be called an apology for a tail, so short, that we may acquit him of any attempt at swagger in wearing this ornament.

The snout of the mole is very swine-like, though his habits are not, and with the exception of one slight drawback, which militates against a desire for a close intimacy with him, he might be considered an eligible acquaintance. The little drawback is, that he has such a multiplicity of parasites upon his shoulders and back, that I think the most ardent entomologist would hardly care to examine, much less to count them. These are no doubt some of the ills that mole-flesh is heir to. With a wish to inform myself of the nature of these parasites, I endeavoured to scrape some of them from the back of a friendly mole without injury to him, for examination, but did not succeed, as they maintained such a hold upon his hair, that upon further prosecution of my investigation, he objected, and so far, that although we had agreed right well together for more than half an hour, he endeavoured to bite me. In this exhibition of ill-temper, he displayed a set of beautiful teeth, and being critical in my observance of them, I noticed particularly the strongly developed canine teeth in the upper jaw. Having frequently examined the jaws of dead moles, my belief in the mole being a carnivorous animal is very much strengthened.

It has long been believed that the mole is a worm-eating animal, and my own observations confirm this. One morning, in the month of April 1880, whilst walking over a small piece of grass land, I saw a mole upon the surface, and whether the strength of the roots of the turf whence he had emerged had prevented his making a re-entry, or whether he had an ambition to seek pastures new, I do not know, but I captured him with little difficulty, greatly to his discomposure, as I judged from the violent palpitation of his heart. I carried him for a short time in the hollow of my left hand, and endeavoured to allay his fears, by stroking his back with my right. My efforts to soothe his perturbation were successful, as by degrees the palpitation ceased, and the heart beat regularly. It occurred to me that a little refreshment might be acceptable to him, and a boy soon procured a quantity of good-sized earthworms. I offered my velvety friend one of them, which he immediately seized with his paws, and as he showed an inclination to sit down, I placed him upon the grass.

He sat down upon the turf as straight as a young boarding-school miss fresh from her back-board, in the presence of her schoolmistress. His tail, which was carefully arranged behind him, and reposed its short length upon the grass, gave him a most jaunty air. He ate seven large worms in quick succession, but metaphorically laid down his knife and fork when half through the eighth.

I have said that he sat perfectly erect during his meal, and in whatsoever way the worms were presented to him, headforemost, tailfirst, or sideways, he always turned each worm headfirst towards him, and killed it before eating it. This he did by biting it in what might be called the neck, where, in most earthworms, a kind of ring or elevated fleshy belt near the head is to be seen. Though the worm has neither bones, brains, eyes, nor feet, it has a heart, which is situated near the head, in or near the belt before spoken of. I noticed carefully that he bit each worm once only; and death was instantaneous. A worm having been killed, he commenced eating it, beginning at the head, and passing it carefully through his hands; thereby all earth was cleared from it, before it entered his mouth. He munched each worm with keen relish, treating each in the same manner, and I could distinctly hear a clear and crisp noise during his refectation, similar, in a small way, to that made by a man eating celery.

A writer in a short article upon the mole in a popular periodical, says: 'Earthworms form the daintiest dinners of the hungry little fellow. But he is a bit of an epicure, objecting to eat the worms until they have been skinned. He is said to perform this operation for himself in the neatest manner.' This is certainly not the case. This same writer further says: 'During these nightly rambles, the mole is sometimes snapped up by a hungry owl, in want of a supper for herself and ravenous family. The owl and owlets have probably little cause for rejoicing; a severe fit of indigestion must surely be their fate after swallowing the tough skin of the mole.' This writer must be unaware that owls, as well as other birds that live upon lizards, mice, and such-like food, though they swallow them whole, afterwards always disgorge the skin and bones, rolled up in a pellet, as being indigestible.

The muscular strength of a mole is considerable, in comparison with his size and weight. A full-grown male measures six and a half inches from the point of the snout to the tip of the tail, the tail itself being three-quarters of an inch in length. His average weight is three and a quarter ounces, and his girth round the shoulders is five inches. The female is less. Moles feed twice a day—in the morning about eight o'clock, and in the afternoon about three, as long experience of their habits has shown.

The idea that the mole is blind is erroneous. He has a pair of brilliant black eyes, though very small, which, upon examination under a microscope, have shown all the parts of the eye

that are known in other animals. Anatomists mention that the mole possesses an advantage in respect to his eyes, which greatly contributes to their security, namely, a certain muscle by which the animal can draw back the eye whenever it is necessary or in danger. It is by the action of this muscle that the eye seems considerably less after death, it being drawn back into the head, and appearing merely as a small black point.

The sense of hearing in the mole is very acute, as is also that of smelling. A mole upon being disturbed by any noise, as can be seen by the attitude of listening that it assumes, afterwards sniffs in the direction from which the sound proceeds, as if to endeavour to judge by the aid of his sense of smell what may have been the object of alarm. Though the sense of hearing may seem more acute than that of smelling in the animal, the latter must be very strongly developed, as by it, in the midst of darkness, it seems to find its food.

The mole has few enemies that it cannot easily evade, except the human mole-catcher. One of the greatest calamities that befalls the mole is an occasional inundation of his dwelling, by which the young ones are frequently drowned. The old ones can save themselves by swimming; but at this a mole cannot be considered an adept, as an observer says it takes a mole nearly four minutes to swim six yards. A dry summer kills off many young moles, as the ground being very hard, they cannot work their way through it to obtain food, or find their way to the surface; and by his behaviour he marks changes of weather, as the temperature or dryness of the air governs his motions as to the depth at which he lives or works. This is from the necessity of following his natural and ordinary food, the common earthworm, which always descends as the cold or drought increases.

The mole is of much more use to the agriculturist than is generally imagined, being a vermicide—or worm-killer—a top-dresser, and a drainer. The Ettrick Shepherd made the following remarks on this subject more than forty years ago: 'The most unnatural of all persecutions,' he said, 'that ever was raised in a country, is that against the mole, that innocent and blessed pioneer who enriches our pastures annually with the first top-dressing, dug with great pains and labour from the fattest of the soil beneath. The advantages of this top-dressing are so apparent, and so manifest to the eye of every unprejudiced person, that it is really amazing how our countrymen should have persisted, now nearly half a century, in the most manly and valiant endeavours to exterminate the moles from the face of the earth.' I have myself frequently noticed mole-burrows doing excellent service as drains, that is, where the mouths of the tunnels have emerged in a ditch. Where the earth is moist, there the worms abound, and there the little pioneer and drainer follows, destroying them, and in their pursuit he so thoroughly tunnels the land, that a kind of natural drainage ensues. As a rule, the mole works from or to a ditch, his instinct governing him to the extent of leaving an outlet for the exit of the water from the ground in which he is working, which if not allowed to escape might accumulate in his tunnels, and thereby endanger his life.

Besides the drainage that is consequent upon these operations, a thorough aëration of the soil takes place with great fertilising effect.

Any careful reader of the late Dr Darwin's book upon *Worms* will understand their habits and manner of feeding, and can then imagine the amount of damage that might be caused by them in a field of young clover or wheat, as, besides eating the leaves of these plants, they consume the roots also. I must allow that the mole's action in pursuit of his prey, in wheat or clover fields, is injurious to the crops, as the roots are disturbed by him, and also his 'tumuli' smother and thereby destroy young clover and corn plants; and in these days of cutting hay and corn crops by machinery, I am aware that the mole-casts sadly interfere with the use of the mowing-machine. Nor is the presence of the little creature on lawns or cricket-fields desirable. But on old pasture-land, the advantages of the operations of the mole are very apparent; the results of the top-dressing—if the mole-casts be periodically spread by hand-labour over the surface of the grass—and the aëration of the soil itself, together with the destruction of worms, show very markedly the benefit conferred by them upon the farmer. It is my strong belief, from a long study of moles and their habits, that the good which the farmer, in the three ways before mentioned, receives at their hands, very considerably outweighs the little accidental damage he may sustain by them.

Many thousands of moles are killed annually in Great Britain. We know of one district, comprising, roughly speaking, eight thousand acres, and of which a great proportion is mountain-land, not arable, and little of it alluvial soil, which forms the beat of a district mole-catcher, who kills on an average above four thousand annually. In the course of sixteen years, as shown by the records he has kept, he has caught more than seventy thousand moles. In all this time he only once came across a family of light-coloured specimens, and they were far from being white. It is said, however, that white moles are not uncommon in Poland. The skins are of most value in the months of December, January, and February, when they fetch eighteenpence per dozen, delivered in London, after having been dressed on the leather-side with alum and salt-petre, and thoroughly cured and dried. A skin in this cured state measures about five inches in length by four in breadth. They are used by furriers for the lining of ladies' cloaks and jackets.

After what has been advanced in the foregoing notes on the mole, it may be allowed us to suggest that this little creature deserves something better than the persistent and deadly persecution to which it has hitherto been subjected. With moles, as with other wild creatures, it is necessary that some limits should be set upon their propagation; and we admit also that a mole in a flower-garden is anything but an agreeable assistant to the gardener. Yet when all has been said and done, there is evidence to show that moles, if restricted in their habitats to meadows and open grounds, serve various useful purposes, the chief of which is the throwing up of fresh subsoil and its exposure to the atmosphere, along

with the kind of natural drainage which is effected by their tunnelled ways. It might be well, therefore, for those who have hitherto carried out unrelenting war against this little underground worker, to reconsider the matter, and set some bounds to their destructive tendencies.

IRISH HUMOUR.

LONDON itself can boast nothing of that sarcastic drollery and emphatic use of figurative speech, which it is impossible to walk in Dublin for half an hour without hearing; for the Irishman's wit is on his tongue, and himself an eloquent, an imaginative, and a humorous person. Even poverty appears no particular bar to his hilarity and good-humour, although a vast amount of characteristic indifference and recklessness is but too often prevalent amongst the lower classes. It is noticeable, too, that however much they may be attached to their native soil, they form, perhaps, next to England, by far the greatest portion of the human family who enter largely into the emigration movement. The facilities, however, for carrying out this laudable design some years ago appear to have had certain drawbacks in the way of ship accommodation; for we read that a jolly set of Irishmen, boon-companions and sworn brothers, had made up their mind to leave the 'old sod' and wend their way to 'Ameriky.' There were five in number—two Paddies, one Murphy, one Dennis, and one Teague. It so happened that the vessel they were to go in could only take four of them. At length honest Teague exclaimed: 'Arrah! I have it. We'll cast lots to see who shall remain.'

But one of the Paddies vowed that it was anything but 'jontee' to do that sort of thing. 'You know, Teague,' he said, 'that I am an arathmatician, and I can work it out by subtraction, which is a great deal better. But you must all agree to abide by the figures.'

All having pledged themselves to do so, Pat proceeded: 'Well, then, take Paddy from Paddy you can't, that's very certain; but take Dennis from Murphy is easy enough, and you will find that Teague remains. By my faith, Teague, my jewel, and it's you that'll have to stay behind.'

Poor Teague was therefore bound to acquiesce in this remarkably novel decision.

When emigration has not been resorted to, we discover our enterprising neighbour equally anxious to take his place in filling up the ranks of the army, in fact, like young Norval, to follow to the field his warlike lord—with, however, this difference, if we may credit the following statement, to act differently on an emergency as the case might require; for we have it on record that an Irishman being about to join a company in the Confederate army during the last American war, was questioned by one of the officers: 'Well, sir, when you get into battle, will you fight or run?'—'An' faith,' replied the Hibernian, 'I'll be after doin' as the majority of ye does.' It must not be understood by this that Pat is deficient in military courage; he merely acts under orders; leave him to his own moral resources, and the result is entirely different.

Although boxing, an English mode of self-

defence, is not promoted as a science in Ireland, we have it upon good authority that our Hibernian friend, out of pure love, will take an inward pleasure in occasionally knocking down his most intimate acquaintance by a different process, and even deem it an especial honour to be knocked down himself. Take the following: An Irish labourer who was in the employment of an English gentleman residing in Ireland, was on one occasion proceeding to a fair, held annually at a neighbouring village, when his master endeavoured to dissuade him from his design. 'You always,' said he, 'come back with a broken head; now, stay at home to-day, Darby, and I'll give you five shillings.'—'I'm for ever and all obliged to your Honour,' was the reply; 'but does it stand to reason,' he added, at the same time flourishing his shillalah over his head—'does it stand to reason that I'd take five shillings, or even five-and-twenty, for the grate bating I'll get to-day?' Darby could not forego such an excellent chance of getting stretched!

In repartee also, an Irishman is thoroughly equal to the occasion; the joy of retaliation being a marked feature so characteristic of their race. On one occasion, Judge Porter, a popular Irish magistrate, in pronouncing the sentence of the court, said to a notorious drunkard: 'You will be confined in jail for the longest period the law will allow, and I sincerely hope you will devote some portion of the time to cursing whisky.'—'By the powers, I will!' was the answer; 'and Porter too.'

At another time, a steamboat passenger not finding his handkerchief readily, somewhat suspiciously inquired of an Irishman who stood beside him if he had seen it, and insinuated a charge of theft. But afterwards finding the said article in his hat, he began to apologise. 'Oh,' said Pat, 'don't be after saying another single word; it was a mere mistake, and on both sides too. You took me for a thief, and I took you for a jintleman.'

On the other hand, the evidence sometimes given in a court of law, more often than not, fully corroborates the old familiar saying, 'Hear one side, and you will be in the dark; but listen to both parties, and all will be clear.' An example will perhaps illustrate this.

'Pray, my good man,' said a judge to an Irishman, who was a witness on a trial, 'what *did* pass between you and the prisoner?'—'Oh, then, please your lordship,' said Pat, 'sure I sees Phelim atop of the wall. "Paddy!" says he. "What?" says I. "Here," says he. "Where?" says I. "Whisht!" says he. "Hush!" says I. And that's all, please your lordship.'

The following is an instance of that gallantry and politeness which is inherent in every true-born Irishman. It is pleasant, indeed, to record the fact that, so sensitive is his nature—often mistaken for pride—that he is said to feel every sensibility wounded, were those whom he had treated kindly to offer any remuneration beyond that of showing that they were grateful. A sudden gust of wind took a parasol from the hand of its owner, and before one had a chance to recollect whether it would be etiquette to catch such an article belonging to a lady to whom he had never been introduced, a lively Emerald dropped his hod of bricks,

caught the parachute in the midst of its gyrations, and presenting it to the fair loser with a low bow, said: 'Faith, madam, if you were as strong as you are handsome, it wouldn't have got away from you.'—'Which shall I thank you for first; the service or the compliment?' asked the lady, smiling.—'Troth, madam,' said Pat, touching the brim of his hat, 'that look of your beautiful eye thanked me for both.'

Again, when Pat undoubtedly sees his mistake, he is said to be one of the first to make an ample apology, as was evidenced by an Irish lawyer in a neighbouring county, who, having addressed the court as 'gentlemen,' instead of 'yer honours,' after he had concluded, a brother of the bar reminded him of his error. He immediately rose and apologised thus: 'May it please the coort, in the hate of debate I called yer honours gentlemen. I made a mistake, yer honours.' The speaker then sat down, and we hope the court was satisfied.

Another instance may be quoted, in which a warm-hearted but rather irritable Irishman asserted that he had seen anchovies growing upon the hedges in the West Indies. An Englishman present said that was totally impossible.

'By the powers, but it is perfectly true, sir,' said he. 'But as you doubt my word, it is necessary that you should do me the honour of burning a little powder with me.'

They accordingly met with pistols; and the Englishman was wounded mortally, and as he lay dying on the ground, his adversary gently bent over his prostrate form, and whispered: 'By the blessed St Patrick, sir, and you were very right, and I am quite wrong; for I recollect now they were not anchovies, but capers.'

Occasionally, however, when Pat will not admit being in the wrong, he speaks his mind regardless of consequences. A story is told of an occurrence at a provincial theatre in Ireland where Macready was personating Virginius. In preparing for the scene in which the body of Dentatus is brought on the stage, the manager called to the Irish attendant—his property-man—for the bier. Pat responded to the call at once, and soon appeared with a full foaming pot of ale—but was received with a string of anathemas for his confounded stupidity. 'The bier, you blockhead!' thundered the manager. 'And sure, isn't it here?' exclaimed Pat, presenting the highly polished quart measure.—'Not that, you stupid fellow! I mean the barrow for Dentatus.' 'Then why don't you call things by their right name?' said Pat. 'Who would imagine for a moment you meant the barrow, when you called for beer?'

We might perhaps go to a considerable length with regard to travelling by car or otherwise, as public conveyances generally, no matter where, afford an extensive field for observation and amusement; but a ride on an Irish car caps the lot for boisterous fun. If we expect that gravity of deportment which so particularly distinguishes our own drivers, we shall possibly be deceived before we have accomplished the first half-mile of our journey; added to which, may be the probability that we are so tickled with the native humour of the driver himself, as he turns round on his seat to address us, that we may occasionally be shot lightly out by the roadside before reaching our proper destination.

'I engaged,' said a burly lawyer, 'a chaise at Galway to conduct me some few miles into the country, and had proceeded some distance, when it came to a sudden stand-still at the beginning of a rather steep incline, and the coachman leaping to the ground, came to the door and opened it.—"What are you at, man? This is not where I ordered you to stop. Has the animal jibbed?"—"Whisht, yer honour, whisht!" said Paddy in an undertone. "I'm only desaving the sly baste. I'll just bang the door; and the crafty ould cratur will think he's intirely got rid of yer honour's splindid form, and he'll be at the top of the hill in no time."

These men, it is almost needless to say, seem to possess the blessing of an active mind and a marvellous range of faculties, which are invariably employed in giving wholesome enjoyment to others. On one occasion, a gentleman requested the driver of a jaunting-car to drive quicker. 'That's jist what I'll be after doing at once, sir; for we are going through a rather lively neighbourhood; and if a few bricks and stones should fly about, or any serimmage takes place, you immediatly drop down quick behind me.'—'I certainly shall; but I devoutly hope that no such amusing pleasantry will take place, as I am on urgent private business.'—'Och! sure, thin, and it can be nothing but a love-affair; and may you soon see the beautiful creature smile on you like the streaks of a summer morning!'

It is related that in the days of sedan-chairs a very fat colonel coming one night out of a theatre, beckoned at once to two fellows, who immediately brought their chair to him; but while he was endeavouring to squeeze into it, a friend, who was just stepping into his carriage, called out: 'Colonel, I go by your door, and will set you down.' He gave one of the chairmen a shilling, and was going, when the other, scratching his head, said he hoped his honour would give them more. 'For what, you scoundrel, when I never got into your chair?'—'But,' replied Pat, eyeing him from head to foot, 'consider the fright yer honour put us in—consider the fright.'

Even for the pedestrian there is no escape; witty sayings, droll remarks, and sarcastic replies constantly hover around him. A modest fellow accompanied a traveller in Wicklow for upwards of a mile, and on bidding him good-bye, asked for a sixpence. 'For what?' inquired the gentleman. 'What have you done for me?'—'Ah, thin! sure haven't I been keeping your honour in discourse?'

We will conclude these slight sketches by introducing an amusing blunder or two, proverbially termed 'bulls.'

On the edge of a small river in the county of Cavan, in Ireland, there is—or used to be—a stone with the following inscription cut upon it, no doubt intended for the information of strangers travelling that way: 'N.B.—When this stone is out of sight, it is not safe to ford the river.'

But before we laugh at our neighbours, we may remember that even the above is almost if not quite surpassed by the famous post erected a few years since by the surveyors of the Kent roads, in England: 'This is the bridle-path to Faversham. If you can't read this, you had better keep to the main road.' We are also reminded of a debate which took place in the Irish House of Commons

in 1795, on the Leather Tax, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Plunkett, observed, with great emphasis: 'That in the prosecution of the present war, every man ought to give his last guinea to protect the remainder.' Mr Vandaleur said: 'However that might be, the tax on leather would be severely felt by the barefooted peasantry of Ireland.' To which Sir B. Roche replied that 'this could be easily remedied by making the underleathers of wood.'

We take for another example the latter portion of an extremely affectionate poetical epistle, addressed to an Irish maiden:

I'm yours to command, both in weepin' and laughter;
I'm awake all the night, that of you I may dhrame;
I'd hang meself now, if you'd marry me ather;
And though I may change, I'll be ever the same.

Then, again, a Dublin advertisement informs us that an Irish doctor has taken a house in Liffey Street, where the deaf may hear of him at all hours; but as his blind patients see him every day from ten till four, they must come at some other time.—And the following bill was once presented by a farrier to a tradesman in the town: 'For intirely curing your black pony that died, immediate payment is requested of one guinea.'

The gallant admiral, Lord Howe, amongst other matters makes mention of one of his crew, an Irishman. 'The fellow,' he says, 'was particularly brave, and a little too fond of a can of grog, yet never omitted to repeat this prayer every night before retiring to rest: "I never murdered any man, and no man ever murdered me, so God bless all mankind;" and Pat tumbled into his hammock, and no doubt slept none the worse for having the benefit of a clear conscience.'

An anecdote is also related of a Professor, whose pupils making too much noise, felt called upon to remind them of the fact, and said: 'Gentlemen, if every one of you will do me the favour of remaining perfectly silent for a few minutes, we shall be better able to distinguish who the individual is that is making the row;' which is quite equal to a medical report which began thus: 'There exists at the present time a great number of influential families in Dublin who have all died of the cholera.'

Even in the making of a will, these little peculiarities will occasionally present themselves: 'I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Bridget the whole of my property without reserve; and to my eldest son, Patrick, one half of the remainder; and to Dennis, my youngest son, the rest. If anything is left, it may go, together with the old cart without wheels, to my sincere and affectionate friend Terence McCarthy, in sweet Ireland.'

It is without the shadow of a doubt that all the charms of the native is in his pure simplicity. Honest Murphy was going to his work early one morning, and was met by a friend, who knew that Murphy's married sister, with whom he lodged, was hourly expected to add another unit to the already overcrowded population. 'Well, is there any news of your sister this morning?' 'Oh, thin,' was the answer, 'indeed there is, I'm glad to tell you; and all's nicely over; thanks be for that same, anyhow.'—'And is it a boy or a girl?' was the eager inquiry. 'Och! by the

living powers, now,' said Pat, 'if I haven't forgotten to ask whether I am an uncle or an aunt!'

Another illustration is afforded by the reply of a young candidate for the office of teacher. Archbishop Whately was endeavouring to elicit the candidate's idea on the market value of labour with reference to demand and supply, but being baffled, the prelate put a question in this simple form: 'If there are in your village two shoemakers with just sufficient employment to enable them to live comfortably, or say tolerably, and no more, what would follow if a third shoemaker set up in the same village?'—'What would follow, sir?' said the candidate. 'Why, a fight to be sure!'—which was likely enough, but it was not the reply the reverend prelate looked for.

THE LOST CHILD.

THE bairnie by the cottage door
Had all the morning played;
The sun shone bright as down the lane
The wee bit bairnie strayed.

He'd go and catch the pretty birds
That sing so clear and sweet:
So down the lane and through the fields
Wander the little feet.

And when the sun sinks in the west,
The child is far from home,
And tired, tired are the little feet—
'O mammy, mammy, come!'

The pretty birds have gone to sleep,
All nature is at rest;
Ah! how this weary, wand'ring bird
Longs for his cosy nest.

The bright eyes of the Night keep watch,
And angels hover round
His grassy bed; oh, weary head,
Its pillow is the ground!

The angels spread their snowy wings;
And as he sleeping lies,
They bear him to his Father's home—
He wakes in Paradise.

For two long days the mother seeks
Her boy, in anguish wild;
Three miles away from the cottage door,
A stranger finds the child.

Oh! mother, dry thy weeping eyes;
Thy bairnie's safe at Home,
And thou shalt see thy boy again—
'O mammy, mammy, come!'

RESEDA.

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